

P240

Am 82

No. 65

Oct 1882 No. 65.

LIBRARY

# "I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT."

2 TIMOTHY, IV: 7.

BY THOMAS GUTHRIE, D. D.

THE Christian's fight is a good fight :

1. Because it is a good cause. How often have good men been found fighting on the bad side ! And how often has the trumpet summoned, from their distant homes and peaceful occupations, those who have no quarrels to settle, nor wrongs to complain of, to the bloody work of slaughter ; to destroy each other's lives and to mangle each other's bodies, till, in that poor, mutilated humanity, a mother would not know her own son ! In war, both sides can not be right ; and the death of every man, therefore, who falls on the side that stands up for the right against the wrong, is a murder, on which the Almighty Judge will hold severe and solemn inquest, laying the guilt at the right door. But, however soldiers may come to regard themselves, or be regarded by others, as machines who are to obey orders without inquiring into the merits of the war, still a man is a man ; he has what his arms have not, reason and conscience. Nor can he, though he would, suppress their voice within him. I can fancy cases where he has little heart to fight. He is not sure that it is a "good fight." Ordered to cut down one, who, though a naked savage, stands on the shore of his country to defend it from aggressors, or on the threshold of his door to protect his wife and daughters from the hands of a brutal soldiery, the sympathies of a generous man can not be on the same side as his sword.

Now, if, soldiers of the Cross, you have formidable enemies to contend with, you have an immense advantage in

this—that your cause is just, and noble, and holy, and good. It is: “a good fight.” Your enemies are not your kindred; bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh; they are the enemies of God and Christ—of virtue and liberty—of light and peace—of your children and of your race—of your bodies and of your souls; tyrants that would bind you in chains worse than iron, and burn, not your house above your head, but yourself in hell forever. I am not saying that the sword has not often flashed on the side of right and been bathed in tyrants’ blood; but men never drew sword in a cause like this; nor to any battle, so much as that to which I summon you, with the world, the devil, and the flesh, are the few pithy words of a brave old general so appropriate. His men were waiting to be addressed ere the fight began. Erect in his saddle, with his gray hairs streaming in the wind, he stretched out his arms, and, pointing to the foe in front, said, ere he rang out the word “*Fire*,” “There are the enemy; if you do not kill them, they will kill you.” So with us. We must destroy sin, or be destroyed by it. Be assured that, unless your prayers stop your sins, your sins will stop your prayers; and that, by God’s help, you must kill sin, or sin will kill you.

2. Because here victory is unmingled joy. It is not so in other fights. The laurels that are won where groans of suffering mingle with the shouts of battle are steeped in tears, and when cannon roar and bells ring out a victory, and shouting crowds throng the street, and illuminations turn night into day, dark is many a home, where fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, widows and orphans, weep for the brave who shall never return. It is said of God, that, in sweet flowers, and singing birds, and painted shells, and shining stars, in all the beautiful and happy works of his hands, he takes delight; but the best and bravest soldiers have sickened at the sight of the work of their hands in that field of carnage, where, locked like

brothers, in each other's arms, friend and foe lie quietly together in one gory bed. There are thorns in victory's proudest crown. He whom men call the Iron Duke is reported to have said, that there was nothing so dreadful as a battle won but a battle lost.

Thank God, our joy over sins slain, bad passions subdued, Satan defeated, has to suffer no such abatements. Heaven, that I can fancy hiding its eyes from other battles, watches over this with the keenest and kindest interest. Angels rejoice in your success. Nor are any tears shed here but such as are poured from the father's eye, when, kissing the returned prodigal, and folding him in his happy embrace, he cries, "Let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

How can it be easy for a man to overcome the world and crucify his own flesh? But if that is hard, it is harder far to suffer the pains of a lost soul, to lie down in everlasting burnings. O! surely, better lose a hand than have the whole body burn; better part with some darling sin than part with Jesus. You have no choice; they only that carry swords on earth shall wave palms in heaven; nor shall any but they who walk here in armor walk there in brightness. The crown is for saints, not for sinners; not for cowards, but for conquerors. And how can you conquer without you fight? The promises are to him that conquers, to him that overcometh—not, indeed, "by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his

name before my Father and before his angels;" and, still higher honor, "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne."

---

### **The Christian Warfare.**

STAND up, my soul I shake off thy fears,  
And gird the gospel armor on;  
March to the gates of endless joy,  
Where Jesus, thy great Captain, 's gone.

Hell and thy sins resist thy course,  
But hell and sin are vanquished foes;  
Thy Jesus nailed them to the cross,  
And sung the triumph when he rose.

Then let my soul march boldly on,  
Press forward to the heavenly gate;  
There, peace and joy eternal reign,  
And glittering robes for conquerors wait.

There shall I wear a starry crown,  
And triumph in Almighty grace;  
While all the armies of the skies  
Join in my glorious Leader's praise.

---

SLEEP not, soldier of the Cross!  
Foes are lurking all around;  
Look not here to find repose,  
This is but thy battle-ground.

Up! and take thy shield and sword;  
Up! it is the call of Heaven;  
Shrink not faithless from thy Lord;  
Nobly strive as he hath striven

Break through all the force of ill;  
Tread the might of passion down,  
Struggling onward, onward still,  
To the conquering Savior's crown.